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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Due to unavoidable circumstances, today's edition of **SALAR DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY** will have only 6 pages. The inconvenience is regretted.

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BJP-JD(S) 'MYSURU CHALO' MARCH KICKS OFF

CM Siddaramaiah calls BJP the 'grandfather of corruption'

BJP leader BS Yediyurappa with Union Ministers HD Kumaraswamy and Prahlad Joshi, BJP state president BY Vijayendra, LOP R Ashoka, and others during the inauguration of 'Mysuru Chalo', in Bengaluru on Saturday; Traffic jams on Bengaluru-Mysuru road amid march *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

The Opposition BJP and its ally JD(S) in Karnataka on Saturday kicked off their seven-day 'Mysuru Chalo' march from Bengaluru, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah alleging his involvement in the illegal site allotment scam in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

BJP state president BY Vijayendra and JD(S) Youth Wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy started the march by blowing a bugle amidst the drum beats.

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy said Congress talks about uplifting the downtrodden communities but what they did in MUDA and Valmiki Corporation scam exposed their 'anti-Dalit' face.

Reacting to the agitation, Chief Minister said BJP is the 'grandfather' of corruption.

"If there is any grandfather of corruption, it's the BJP. Whom do we call '40 per cent corruption"? It's BJP only," he told reporters in Hassan.

Siddaramaiah said the Karnataka Contractors' Association president D Kempanna had alleged that the previous BJP government was collecting 40 per cent commission.

Speaking on the occasion, Opposition leader in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka said the Congress has no moral right to question Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for issuing a notice to the chief minister.

Cong slams BJP over involving accused in Chaitra Kundapura case

Karnataka Congress has criticised BJP for including Prasad Byndoor, an accused in Chaitra Kundapur case, in their 'Mysuru Chalo yatra'. On X, the party remarked, "It is ironic that an accused in a ticket fraud case is marching with BJP. BJP had previously claimed that there is no connection with the accused in the ticket scam. Why is this accused part of the march?."

Chaitra Kundapur case involves allegations that Chaitra and her team deceived an industrialist by promising BJP a ticket in exchange for significant money of Rs 1.5 crore. . *—PTI/ Salar News*

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WAYANAD LANDSLIDE

Rescue ops enter final stage, death toll rises over 350

WAYANAD, 3 AUG

As rescue operations in the landslide-hit areas of this north Kerala district entered fifth day, rescuers unearthed more bodies and body parts, taking the death toll to 357, with around 206 people still reported missing.

Huge boulders and logs brought by landslides and deposited in the residential areas of Mundakkai and Chooralmala, as well as the waterlogged terrain, are posing a significant challenge to rescue efforts.

In a bid to locate people still believed to be trapped beneath the debris in landslide-ravaged villages, deep search radars will be deployed in the affected areas.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the search and rescue operations have entered their final stages, but 206 people are still missing.

Addressing the media here, he said there is difficulty in identifying the dead bodies and parts recovered from the Chaliyar river.

Kerala government announced that a township will be established in a secure area to rehabilitate those displaced by the catastrophic landslide that occurred in the Mundakkai region of Wayanad district. A 'Help for Wayanad' cell has been formed under Joint Land Revenue Commissioner A Geetha IAS to coordinate these offers. Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said that senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will construct 100 houses for rehabilitation. *—PTI*

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Actor Mohanlal pledges Rs 3 crore for rehabilitation works in Wayanad

Wayanad, 3 Aug

Actor and Lt Col Mohanlal in Wayanad, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Well-known actor Mohanlal, who is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Territorial Army, on Saturday reached landslide-hit Wayanad, donning his army uniform and pledged Rs three crore for the rehabilitation works of the disaster-hit region. The actor, who reached the Army camp at Meppadi, held a brief discussion with the officers and left for the landslide-hit zone along with others. Speaking to the media, Mohanlal said the magnitude of the disaster can only be understood by witnessing it firsthand. The actor was conferred the Lt Colonel post in the territorial army in 2009. Meanwhile, movie director Major Ravi, who accompanied Mohanlal, said foundation will also rebuild Mundakkayi schools. *—PTI*

India has become a food surplus country: PM

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India has become a food surplus country and is also working to provide solutions for global food and nutritional security.

The Prime Minister said agriculture is at the centre of India's economic policies, and the Union Budget 2024-25 has given a big push to sustainable and climate-resilient farming and developing a complete ecosystem to support Indian farmers.

He was addressing the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE), which is being organised in India after 65 years.

Prime Minister also said India has provided 1,900 new climate-resilient varieties of crops in the last 10 years.

The conference will highlight India's proactive approach to global agricultural challenges and showcase the nation's advancements in agricultural and policy.

He presented Shri Anna, Millet, as a solution given the superfood's quality of minimum water and maximum production.

- He was addressing the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE), which is being organised in India after 65 years

He also mentioned the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, where money is transferred to the bank accounts of 10 crore farmers with a single click, and a digital public infrastructure for digital crop survey that provides real-time information to farmers and enables them to make decisions.

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Member of NITI Aayog Ramesh Chand, Conference President Matin Qaim and Secretary of DARE and DG, ICA Himanshu Pathak were also present on the occasion. *—PTI*

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Man dies after jumping in front of Metro in B'luru

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

A 57-year-old male passenger jumped in front of an approaching Metro train at Doddakallasandra station in an alleged suicide bid, disrupting Bengaluru Metro's Green Line services for three hours. The incident happened at 5.41 PM on Saturday, BMRCL said. The reason for the suicide remains unknown, and the deceased has not yet been identified. The body was found under the metro train. Shortly after the incident, power was cut, halting metro traffic abruptly. The train was stopped just before arriving at the station, and at least 100-150 passengers were asked to get down and use the footpath along with the bridge to continue their journey towards the station. The Konnakunte police station responded to the scene. This tragic event marks the second such incident in recent times. On 1 August, a four-year-old boy narrowly escaped after falling onto the tracks at Baiyappanahalli Metro Station. *—Salar News*

2 YOUTHS ARRESTED FOR OFFERING GANGAJAL AT TAJ MAHAL

AGRA, 3 AUG

Police arrested two youths from the Taj Mahal premises on Saturday after they were seen pouring water from a bottle there. A local right-wing Hindu outfit Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha claimed that the two were its members and had offered holy 'Gangajal' as they believe the monument is a Hindu temple.

Suraj Kumar Rai, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Agra City), said the two youths were arrested following a written complaint by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel posted inside the Taj Mahal. The arrested youths were Vinesh Chaudhary and Shyam A purported video of the incident also appeared on social media. *—PTI*

Manu misses her 3rd medal at Olympics

CHATEAUROUX, 3 AUG

Manu Bhaker *PHOTO: PTI*

The sensational Manu Bhaker's dream of a grand treble went up in smoke after she lost the tie-shoot for bronze medal to Hungarian Veronika Major by the narrowest of margins in the women's 25m sports pistol event at the Olympic Games on Saturday.

In a high-quality final, Bhaker gave it her all and was placed No.1 among eight shooters for a brief period, but she could not maintain her consistency and eventually finished fourth. Nonetheless, the 22-year-old will return home with her twin bronze-medal feat in women's 10m air pistol and mixed team 10m air pistol.

Expectations were really high from Bhaker to bring home a hat-trick of medals given her awe-inspiring form. She stood up to the challenge even after slipping to sixth position early in the final. Bhaker conceded at the end of the contest that she was nervous, and no matter how hard she tried to remain calm, she couldn't.

However, the star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen will need to play out of his skin to keep his maiden gold medal hopes alive when he takes on the reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at Sunday. *—PTI*

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MB Patil *PHOTO: FB*

K'taka's 'KHIR City' project to begin on 23 Aug

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Karnataka government's ambitious project "Knowledge Health Innovation Research-City" (KHIR-City), claimed to be first of its kind, will be inaugurated on 23 August.

The novel city will be established on a land area spanning around 2,000 acres near the BIAL airport, State Minister for Infrastructure MB Patil announced on Saturday.

In the first phase, the project will be developed on 1,000 acres. With an estimated investment of over Rs 40,000 crore, the entire project is to create about 50,000 jobs.

According to him, the project, which will be inaugurated at an event in a private hotel in presence of chief minister Siddaramaiah and expert stakeholders, is set to attract leading global institutions from all four sectors.

The proposed KHIR-City, expected to significantly contribute to the state's economy, will also boost exports, enabling Bengaluru to reach new heights, Patil noted.

It will feature hospitals, innovative industries, and research institutions, which will be the hallmark of this project, he added. *—PTI*

Bharatanatyam legend Yamini dies at 84

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy died at the Apollo hospital here on Saturday. She was 84. "She was suffering from age-related issues and was in the ICU for the last seven months," Krishnamurthy's manager and secretary Ganesh told PTI. Krishnamurthy's mortal remains will be brought to her institute at 9 am on Sunday. Krishnamurthy received Padma Shri at the young age of 28 in 1968, Padma Bhushan in 2001 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016. *—PTI*

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ISS MISSION

Proud, not nervous: Group Capt Shukla's family on his selection

LUCKNOW, 3 AUG

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's family in Lucknow is filled with pride as congratulatory greetings keep pouring in on selection for an Indo-US mission to International Space Station (ISS).

His father Shambhu Dayal Shukla, a retired government officer, said the family is not nervous about the expedition, but filled with pride for his achievement, while his mother Asha Shukla described Shubhanshu, their youngest child, as "cool-minded" who handles every situation without losing his temper.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that Group Captains Shubhanshu Shukla and Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair have been selected for the mission to the ISS. Shubhanshu's name has been recommended as the primary astronaut and Nair will be his backup, the ISRO said.

Shubhanshu Shukla *PHOTO: FB*

"We are very happy and feel proud of his achievements. We are praying to God that the mission becomes successful, which we are confident about," Shambhu said.

"Neither me nor my son or anyone in the family is nervous about the mission. We don't get into negative thoughts, we do our prayers and leave the rest on the Almighty," Dayal said.

"Shubhanshu will join the Axiom 4 mission to the ISS, collaborating with NASA and ISRO, and working alongside astronaut Peggy Whitson. This mission will mark a significant milestone in spaceflight cooperation between ISRO and NASA," the school said in a post on Facebook. He was also a MTech graduate from IISC Bengaluru. *—PTI*

War threat real as US moves jets to Middle East

WASHINGTON, 3 AUG

The US Defence Department will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier in the region, the Pentagon said as President Joe Biden made good on his promise to beef up the American military presence to help defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies and safeguard US troops.

In a statement, the department said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also ordered additional ballistic missile defence-capable cruisers and destroyers to the European and Middle East regions and is taking steps to send more land-based ballistic missile defence weapons there.

The shifts come as US leaders worry about escalating violence in the Middle East in response to recent attacks by

PHOTO: US AIR FORCE

Israel on Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, which triggered threats of retaliation. France urged their citizens to immediately leave Iran. Siprus also initiated a large scale evacuation plan to help people leave the middle east in case of the war expands. Poland also advised their citizens to not travel to Israel, Iran and Lebanon. Multiple airlines have suspended or postponed including United Air lines, Turkey airlines and many more. *—AP with agencies*

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NDA supporters take part in the inauguration of 'Mysuru Chalo' rally, in Bengaluru on Saturday. (R) Deputy Chief Minister DK participates in 'Janandolana' event, at Ramanagara on Saturday

PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD, X/@DKSHIVAKUMAR

Corruption is relative of BJP, JD(S): Shivakumar

Why BJP leaders did not demand resignations from those involved in corruption during their tenure? asks DyCM

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday hit out at the saffron party leaders saying corruption was the blood relative of opposition BJP and JD(S).

Speaking at the 'Janandolana' event, a riposte to BJP's Padayatra, at Ramanagara, Shivakumar said corruption is the father, mother, brother, sister and relative of BJP and JD(S). The people of the state have given 135 seats for my leadership and 19 seats for Kumaraswamy's leadership."

Shivakumar dismissed statements from JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy, who claimed that Shivakumar was orchestrating false cases against him. "I've faced the legal system and the cases against me and my family," he said.

The KPCC President criticised Union Minister Kumaraswamy for blaming him in a pen drive case involving former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna.

"Kumaraswamy initially accused me, then shifted the blame to Gowda (BJP MLA Preetham Gowda). Why is Kumaraswamy participating in the padayatra if Gowda was involved? Why is BJP silent on these allegations?" he questioned.

About BJP State President BY Vijayendra's claim that he is the "father of corruption," Shivakumar said there were scandals, including the PSI scam, during BJP's tenure. Why BJP leaders did not demand resignations from those involved then? What did his father (BS Yediyurappa) do to go to jail? Why did his father resign after shedding tears? Why did the Governor permit his prosecution when he was the CM? He should answer these questions," he asked.

> **CM and his family have nowhere to hide. The allegations are very serious. It is time for him to resign and allow for a more competent, transparent government to come to Karnataka. It's a lame-duck government, they have no money to do any developmental activities and whatever money is left in the coffers after these mindless populist policies of theirs are being swindled away by such corruption scandal**
> -Tejasvi Surya, Bengaluru South BJP MP

> **It's a padayatra against corruption. Siddaramaiah's govt has been drowned in corruption from day one. There is corruption in all departments. They are putting Karnataka for sale. People are against this govt and we are representing the people**
> -Basavaraj Bommai, BJP MP and former CM

The Deputy Chief Minister said BJP had advertised in newspapers about former JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda's alleged land grabs and corruption. "Can the BJP leaders answer these allegations now?" he asked.

Turning to recent political manoeuvres, Shivakumar said the current Congress government, led by him and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, would remain stable despite attempts to destabilise it. He criticised BJP leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for corruption and misuse of power. "BJP neither took out a padayatra for the cause of Cauvery or Mekedatu nor for youth employment or farmers' welfare. But now they are taking out a padayatra for this (MUDA scam)," he noted.

Shivakumar challenged Kumaraswamy to fulfil his promises of job creation and industrial development in Mandya and Hassan. "Kumaraswamy said he would create 10,000 jobs in Mandya. He also promised to set up industries in Hassan. Our Congress government in Karnataka is ready to support you in this endeavour."

"We conducted a 'Government at your Doorsteps' programme at Channapatna which gathered 22,000 pleas. No sites have been allotted to the people of Channapatna for 20 years. I have instructed MLA Iqbal Hussain to ensure that sites are allotted at any cost. We are preparing for it," he said.

—Salar News

3 youths killed as car rams into tree near Kolar

KOLAR, 3 AUG

Three youths were killed on the spot when a luxury car rammed into a roadside tree near Kolar on Saturday. The deceased were Harshavardhan of Hassan, Basavana Gowda of Ballari and Prajwal of Bangarpet students of Reva University in Bengaluru. Another occupant of the car Sai Gagan of Bangarpet escaped with minor injuries. Police said the deceased were in the age group of 20 to 21 years.

—Salar News

BBMP to plant 19,850 saplings in City from 6-12 Aug

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Forest Department will plant saplings from 6 to 12 August, inviting public participation to plant 19,850 tree saplings around the lakes, parks, and other areas. BBMP forest unit will provide saplings, tree covers and necessary arrangements for planting. Those interested can register at https://bit.ly/friendsofcac. The public can contact Zonal Forest Officers for their respective zones: Mahesh (RFO) at 7019196107 for Yelahanka, Pushpa (RFO) at 9480685541 for Mahadevpura, Narendra Babu (RFO) at 9480685399 for Bommanahalli, Krishna (RFO) at 7760553450 for RR Nagar, and Rajappa (RFO) at 9448234928 for Dasarahalli.

—Salar News

22 narrowly escape as KSRTC e-bus crashes in Kodagu

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

More than 22 passengers narrowly escaped injuries when a KSRTC electric bus swerved and crashed into a slope near Suntikoppa in Kodagu district on Saturday morning. The bus was prevented from toppling into a coffee plantation by a protective fence, and passengers suffered only minor bruises and sprains. The KSRTC Power Plus electric bus was travelling to Bengaluru via Mysuru. An oncoming jeep attempted to overtake a car near Kodagarahalli, forcing the bus driver to swerve to avoid a head-on collision, according to the Transport Department. The impact threw passengers from their seats, with many on the right side falling onto the left side seats and the floor. Villagers and others assisted passengers in exiting through the emergency door as the main door was jammed against the ground. An alternative bus from Madikeri arrived and took passengers to their destinations. *—Salar News*

CM Siddaramaiah and Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh visit Shiradi Ghat hill collapse site, in Hassan on Saturday

PHOTO: SALAR

State will build 100 homes in landslide-hit Wayanad: CM

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday announced that his government will construct 100 houses for victims of landslide-hit Wayanad.

Taking to the social media post 'X', Siddaramaiah said in light of the tragic landslide in Wayanad, Karnataka stands in solidarity with Kerala.

"I have assured CM Shri @pinarayivijayan of our support and announced that Karnataka will construct 100 houses for the victims. Together, we will rebuild and restore hope," he said.

Sharing Siddaramaiah's post on 'X', Congress leader and former Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi said he is deeply grateful to the people and the government of Karnataka for their generous support during these difficult times in Wayanad.

"Your commitment to building 100 houses for the victims of the tragic landslide is a significant step towards rehabilitation efforts. The compassion and solidarity of Indians are the strengths that Wayanad needs right now," he added.

As many as over 300 people have died and over 500 were injured in the massive landslides that hit Wayanad district in the small hours of 30 July.

Around 300 people are suspected to be missing, and rescue operators are battling adverse conditions, including waterlogged soil, as they search through destroyed homes and buildings. *—PTI*

FIRMS SUPPLY MEDICAL AID TO LANDSLIDE-HIT

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Following an appeal by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for corporate support for Wayanad landslide victims, significant aid was mobilised under Corporate Social Responsibility initiative.

According to the data received from Chief Minster's office, Kempegowda International Airport Limited contributed 1,008 water bottles, 100 raincoats, 500 bottle sanitizers, 15 tents, 1,000 PPE kits, 5,000 gloves, 3,000 3-ply masks and 8,000 N-95 masks.

Volvo Group Bengaluru has donated 2,000 packs of sanitary pads, 100 PPE kits, and two trucks for transportation. Electronic City Industrial Association and Pranav Foundation are providing 40 stretchers, 250 body bags, 1,000 N-95 masks, 500 bottle sanitizers, 1,000 gloves and one truck.

Biocon, Narayana Health and Syngene contributed 2,200 masks, 100 high-quality raincoats, 400 litres of sanitiser, five cartons of bedsheets and cloths, and 250 PPE kits. Ashaya Trust and Utishtha Swayam Seva Organisation provided 1,000 blankets and Rs 25 lakh.

—Salar News

CM inspects construction of highways

MYSURU, 3 AUG

- As the Chief Minister's vehicle approached Bilikere Cross, he was briefed on the 41 km long four-lane National Highway project proposed between Bilikere Cross and Yadagondanahalli.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, on Saturday, while travelling from Mysuru to the Shiradi Ghat landslide site by road, inspected the ongoing construction work of highway projects in Karnataka and gathered information about it from the officials.

As the Chief Minister's vehicle approached Bilikere Cross, he was briefed on the 41km-long four-lane National Highway project proposed between Bilikere Cross and Yadagondanahalli. Officials informed him that tenders have been called for this Rs 600-crore project.

Concerned about road safety, the Chief Minister issued instructions to cover the potholes along the route. Stressing on the need to prevent accidents, he directed officials to cover the potholes when the rains stop. While passing through Doddakadanur in Hole Narasipur taluk, he directed officials over the phone to replace dangerously located electric poles and repair hazardous wiring.

As it was Siddaramaiah's birthday on Saturday, admirers along the route waited to offer garlands and shawls to wish the Chief Minister. Siddaramaiah did not receive anything by saying "I do not celebrate my birthday'. He waved his hand and moved on.

—ANI

TECHIES UP IN ARMS

OUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD
KARNATAKA GOVERNMENTS MOVE TO INCREASE WORKING HOURS 14 HOURS WORK DAY
WE ARE NOT SLAVES
RESIST
KARNATAKA GOVT'S MOVE TO INCREASE WORKING HOURS 14 HOUR WORKDAY
KITU

Members of Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees Union protest against State government's move to increase working hours in the sector, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Give relief package for Chikkamagaluru: Min

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Energy Minister KJ George has formally requested Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to provide a special relief package, in addition to the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) grant, to address the extensive damage caused by heavy rains and strong winds in Chikkamagaluru district.

During a meeting with the CM and Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, Minister George, also the district in-charge for Chikkamagaluru, emphasised the severe impact of the weather events in the district. He said the current NDRF grant is insufficient to cover the extensive remedial work needed in the district and urged the State government to consider this a special case and provide additional funding for natural calamity relief.

"During my recent visit to the rain-affected areas in Chikkamagaluru district, it was evident that many houses have collapsed and roads have been significantly damaged. This has disrupted road connectivity, necessitating temporary alternative routes. There have been landslides in many areas, with the potential for mores," George said. *—PTI*

NEED CM'S APOLOGY: WHISTLEBLOWER

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Anti-Graft/Corruption and Environmental Forum President TJ Abraham, who had filed a complaint against Siddaramaiah over the MUDA scam has demanded a public apology from the Chief Minister after being labelled a "blackmailer". "If there is no public apology, I will initiate criminal defamation proceedings against you," Abraham said on Saturday.

Abraham called Siddaramaiah's accusations "utterly false and frivolous". He claimed that the Chief Minister's allegations were to discredit him as he pursued a case involving criminal manipulations related to Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA). Abraham accused Siddaramaiah and his family of illegally obtaining alternative sites from MUDA, resulting in corrupt gains amounting to around Rs 55.80 crore.

Earlier, Siddaramaiah had referred to Abraham as a blackmailer.

—Salar News

Congress MLA, son booked for abetting suicide of PSI

YADGIR, 3 AUG

A case was registered by police against Congress MLA Channareddy Tannur and his son Pampanagouda Tannur on Saturday after a Dalit sub-inspector allegedly died by suicide, following his transfer within seven months of posting. They were booked on charges of intentional insult with an intent to provoke breach of peace, abetment of suicide and criminal liability on a complaint by Parusharam's wife Shwetha NV.

She alleged that the father-son duo had allegedly demanded Rs 30 lakh from her husband if he wished to continue in the same place. Shwetha said Parashuram was in tears ever since he was transferred and told her that he felt he should die.

When Shwetha, who is pregnant, went to Raichur to her parents' house for the delivery of her child, she got to know that Parashuram was hospitalised with bleeding from his nose and mouth.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said he has ordered an investigation into the case. The government handed over the probe to the CID, sources said.

The incident took a political turn with BJP and JD(S) slamming the government for pushing sincere officers towards suicide. *—PTI*

CENTRE'S PUSH

Tumakuru gets Rs 3,750 cr railway projects

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Union government has proposed three new railway projects at Rs 3,750 crore across 118 kilometres in Tumakuru Lok Sabha Constituency.

This was announced after a meeting chaired by Minister of State for Railways V Somanna and attended by Lok Sabha members from Karnataka, officials from Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, National Highways Authority of India and State Public Works Department in Bengaluru on Saturday. The meeting took stock of the progress of 375km of National Highways (an expenditure totalling Rs 6,400 crore) and railway overpasses in the State.

The three main projects announced for Tumakuru Lok Sabha constituency are Sira-Madhugiri Bairenahalli Four-Lane Road (52km), a bypass road to Tumakuru city (45 km) and white-topping of Old NH-206 from Bhatwadi to Mallasandra (21km).

Ministry of Railways also approved five new overpasses at Rs 350 crore and they are designed to replace level crossings.

The meeting reviewed the works on NH-48 (Nelamangala to Tumakuru), NH-206 (Mallasandra to Karadi). The two-lane NH-150(A) from KB Cross to Nelligere will be converted to four lanes. Also, single-lane highways such as NH-234 (Huliyar to Sira) stretch and NH-544E (Karnataka to Andhra border via Sira town) will be developed into a two-lane road.

The State government was requested in the meeting to submit a proposal to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to upgrade a 347km stretch connecting Malavalli, Maddur, Kunigal, Tumkuru, Koragere, Madhugiri, Pavagada, Kalyanadurga and Ballari to national highway status. These initiatives are part of Bharatmala Pariyojana and other schemes of Central government. *—Salar News*

Gyanvapi row: Varanasi court to hear plea on 17 Aug

VARANASI, 3 AUG

A Varanasi court on Saturday briefly heard a plea moved by Hindu petitioners to stop Muslims from walking over the roof of Vyasji's basement in the Gyanvapi mosque complex and listed the matter for further hearing on 17 August. Representatives of the Muslim side to the dispute were present during the hearing. The Muslim side is expected to put forth its arguments in the matter on the next date. According to the petitioners' counsel, Madan Mohan Yadav, following an order of the district court, worship began at Vyasji's basement on January 31 and devotees are now able to view the idols installed there. On 31 January, the Varanasi district judge had directed the local administration to arrange for Hindus to conduct worship rituals inside one of the sealed basements. The court specifically directed that a priest be allowed to perform puja in the southern cellar of the mosque complex. *—PTI*

Rape accused's bakery razed in Ayodhya

AYODHYA, 3 AUG

Authorities on Saturday razed the bakery of a man accused of raping a 12-year-old girl and recording the act on camera, according to an official. "The bakery of Moid Khan has been demolished," Ayodhya's District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh told PTI. "The bakery had one big room and one small room. It was illegally built over a pond, and has been demolished," Singh said. Police had on 30 July arrested bakery owner Moid Khan and his employee Raju Khan from the Pura Kalandar area of Ayodhya district in connection with the rape case. Speaking in the UP Assembly on Thursday, Chief Minister Adityanath had claimed that Moid Khan belonged to the Samajwadi Party. "Moid Khan is from the Samajwadi Party and a member of the Ayodhya MP's team. Samajwadi Party has not taken action against him," Adityanath had said. *—PTI*

TMC students' wing gheraoes Calcutta University VC

KOLKATA, 3 AUG

The Trinamool Congress's students' wing TMCP gheraoed interim vice-chancellor of Calcutta University Shanta Dutta for over nine hours, claiming that she chaired a meeting of the varsity's highest decision-making body, the syndicate, even as her term has ended. The gherao began at 3pm on Friday and continued till midnight, TMCP spokesperson Abhirup Chakraborty said. "Since our semester exams will begin a day later, and considering Dutta's age and health issues, we did not continue the gherao indefinitely. However, students will never allow the authority to convene a syndicate meeting with Dutta at the helm. We term this as illegal," he said. Chakraborty said Dutta's term was for six months, and she was holding onto the post in an unauthorised manner, discharging administrative responsibilities. Dutta was appointed by Governor CV Ananda Bose, with the TMC government's Higher Education Department stating it wasn't consulted. *—PTI*

Four ruling alliance MLAs meet Jarange; demand for quota

JALNA, 2 AUG

Four MLAs, including two from BJP and one from the Shiv Sena, met activist Manoj Jarange in Antarwali Sarati in Jalna district on Saturday to discuss the Maratha quota issue. The delegation comprised Narayan Kuche and Ranajagatjitsinha Patil, BJP's MLAs from Badnapur and Tuljapur, respectively, Shiv Sena's Nanded North MLA Balaji Kalyankar and Independent legislator from Barshi Rajendra Raut. Jarange reiterated his demand for providing reservation to the Marathas under the OBC segment by giving them Kunbi certificates and said a meeting of community members of 29 August will lay down the roadmap for further action. *—PTI*

Hmar says agreement with Meiteis 'null & void'

Fresh violence was reported in Manipur again

IMPHAL, 3 AUG

Just a day after an agreement was signed between Hmar and Meitei representatives to restore peace in ethnic violence-hit Jiribam district of Manipur, the apex body of the Hmar community said that the pact stood "null and void".

Fresh violence was reported in Jiribam on Friday as shots were fired and an abandoned house in a Meitei village was torched, officials said.

Hmar Inpui, the apex body of the community, claimed that its affiliated units signed the agreement without the knowledge of the general headquarters and dissolved its Jiribam unit in response.

"Hmar Inpui, general headquarters, is shocked to learn about the peace initiative that was taken on 1 August at a CRPF facility in Cachar, Assam. The first such initiative was held in Silchar on 1 July. The Hmar Inpui condemned the engaging actors and negated the efforts that took place without our prior, informed consent," it said in a statement on Friday.

Hmar Inpui hereby declares the initiatives of 1 August, 2024 between the representatives of Meitei and Hmar of Jiribam district as null and void. Accordingly, Hmar Inpui dissolved Hmar Inpui, Jiribam region and all its affiliated organisations (HYA, HSA, HNU, HWA) under Jiribam jurisdiction, it added.

Representatives of the Meitei and Hmar communities reached an agreement at a meeting held at a CRPF facility in adjoining Assam's Cachar on Thursday.

The meeting was moderated by Jiribam district administration, Assam Rifles and CRPF personnel. Representatives of Thadou, Paite and Mizo communities of the district were also present in the meeting. *—PTI*

Don't replace Assam Rifles: Kuki-Zo MLAs write to PM

IMPHAL, 3 AUG

Ten Kuki-Zo MLAs of Manipur wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention to ensure that Assam Rifles continue to guard sensitive areas of the ethnic strife-torn state and are not replaced by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The MLAs said that when the Centre was working to end the conflict, removing the Assam Rifles and replacing it with a new force "with no comparable knowledge of the terrain or the people" could result in an escalation of violence.

"We have come to learn that there is a plan to withdraw 9th Bn and 22nd Battalion of AR from their current sensitive deployment in Kangvai and Kangpokpi. This wholesome decision to replace the aforementioned AR battalions with CRPF at this critical juncture is nothing but a sinister design," the legislators said.

Their call for the prime minister's intervention came after media reports claimed that a large number of Assam Rifles troops would be moved out from the state and deployed in Jammu.

"Assam Rifles has the most experience among central armed police forces in Manipur with unparalleled knowledge of the local populace, both Kuki-Zo tribals and Meiteis. Their understanding of the culture and geopolitical sensitivities of the region has been crucial in fostering an environment of peace," the letter said. *—PTI*

Hmar claims that they signed the agreement without the prior knowledge of the general headquarters **PHOTO: X**

WAYANAD, JHARKHAND & U'KHAND

Rescue operation continues at the landslide-hit Chooralmala, in Wayanad district **PHOTO: PTI**

Landslide-hit areas of Wayanad find voice through ham radio

WAYANAD, 3 AUG

As the devastating landslides ravaged a hilly area of Wayanad, leaving a trail of destruction and chaos in their wake, a group of ham radio enthusiasts rose to the challenge, establishing a critical communication network that has helped save lives and facilitate rescue efforts.

The amateur radio system, set up by volunteer operators on the ground floor of the District Collector's office in Kalpetta, has been providing vital information to affected communities and authorities, facilitating rescue efforts and relief operations.

Receivers, amplifiers, computers for logging and digital modulation, and other equipment are used to operate the station. Ham radio operators transmit information from the disaster area to the station through ham radio transmitters. A repeater setup at Ambalavayal Ponmudi Kotta facilitates ham radio communication. *—PTI*

Incessant rains wash away road diversions, uproot trees

RANCHI/GUMLA/RAMGARH, 3 AUG

Several road diversions were washed away, trees uprooted, houses damaged and a bridge collapsed due to incessant rain for the past two days in Jharkhand, an official said on Saturday. However, no casualty was reported from any part of the state till now, a disaster management official said. The Jharkhand government has already ordered that all schools be closed on Saturday in view of the rains. NDRF teams had been deployed in Ranchi on Friday. *—PTI*

Rescue Ops in Kedarnath: Over 10,500 evacuated

RUDRAPRAYAG, 3 AUG

The operation to rescue pilgrims stranded along a rain-ravaged trek route to the Himalayan Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand entered its third day on Sunday. More than 10,500 people have been evacuated, some airlifted by air force helicopters.

Officials said around 1,300 pilgrims are stranded in Kedarnath, Bhimbali and Gaurikund, and are safe. Personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and police are engaged in the rescue operation. The Indian Air Force's Chinook and MI17 helicopters airlifted some pilgrims from the area on Friday. The trek route to Kedarnath suffered extensive damage as a result of a cloudburst in Junglechatti . *—PTI*

Coaching row: Court disposes of plea of basement partners

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Tis Hazari court on Saturday disposed of the bail pleas of the co-owners of the basement where three civil services aspirants died due to flooding and asked them to approach the competent court as the Delhi High Court has transferred the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Rakesh Kumar, after noting the submissions of Delhi police, disposed of the bail pleas of accused Harvinder, Tejinder, Parvinder and Sarabjeet.

The court has granted the accused person the liberty to approach the competent court. Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Srivastav appeared for Delhi police and informed the court that the investigation had been transferred to the CBI. Defence counsel Amit Chaddha along with Kaushal Jeet Kait, Daksh Gupta and Jatin Gupta appeared for the accused persons. Defence counsel Amit Chaddha said, "There is no Regular Case by CBI till date. Can an accused be left remediless? ASJ Rakesh Kumar said that he cannot hear these bail applications in the "changed circumstances," as the case has been transferred to CBI. Police has booked the co-owners for culpable homicide and other charges. *—ANI*

ABROGATION OF ART 370

United Oppn stages protest for restoration of J&K's statehood

JAMMU, 3 AUG

All Party United Front (APUF), a Jammu-based amalgam of over a dozen opposition political and social parties, staged a demonstration on Saturday to press for restoration of statehood ahead of the Supreme Court set 30 September deadline for holding of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The protesters, including senior members of the Congress, National Conference, PDP, CPI (M) and Shiv Sena (UBT), assembled outside the statue of Maharaja Hari Singh near Tawi bridge in the heart of the city, also seeking rollback of a recent Central government order providing more powers to the lieutenant governor. "The main opposition parties, minus BJP and its cohorts, have come together to convey a strong message that we want immediate restoration of the full statehood before holding of the assembly elections along with democratic rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Pradesh Congress Committee senior vice-president Ravinder Sharma said. He accused BJP-led Central government of "shamelessly downgrading" the historic Dogra state and snatching the "status, dignity, identity and rights" of people.

Last month, the Union Home Ministry gave more powers to the lieutenant governor by amending rules framed under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.*—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

UDDHAV ACCUSES BJP OF INDULGING IN 'POWER JIHAD'

PUNE, 3 AUG

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday launched a broadside against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing the former ally of indulging in "power jihad" by breaking political parties to form a government.

Hitting back at Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his "Aurangzeb Fan Club' barb aimed at him, he dubbed the top BJP leader a political descendant of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan king who defeated the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat.

Addressing party workers at the Shiv Sankalp rally here, he also accused the Eknath Shinde-led dispensation of bribing voters by giving "revdis" (freebies) to them in the form of schemes.

Accusing the former ally of breaking parties, he said, "If Muslims are with us after we explained to them our Hindutva, then we are (according to the BJP) the Aurangzeb Fan Club. Then what you are doing is power jihad." *—PTI*

Row erupts over Western Ghats

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Congress on Friday accused the Centre of delay in declaring the 'ecologically sensitive area' tag for a portion of the Western Ghats and claimed that it is "directly responsible" for the human tragedy in Wayanad.

The Opposition party's attack came after the Centre issued a fresh draft notification to declare more than 56,800 square kilometres of the Western Ghats across six States, including 13 villages in Kerala's landslide-hit Wayanad, an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), inviting suggestions and objections within 60 days.

PHOTO: PTI

The notification, issued on 31 July, came a day after a series of landslides claimed more than 300 lives in Wayanad district.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh recalled that on 5 August, 2019, during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, he had raised the Issue of the protection of the Western Ghats.

The Union government instead appears to have gone with the recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee, he said.

This will result in future ecological disasters, and will threaten the livelihood and water security of the people living in these areas, Ramesh claimed.

The draft notification proposes to declare 9,993.7 square km in Kerala, including 13 villages in two talukas of the landslide-hit district, as ecologically sensitive. —PTI

Sri Lanka releases two Tamil Nadu fishermen

CHENNAI, 3 AUG

Sri Lankan Navy handed over two fishermen, recently apprehended, and also the mortal remains of a fisherman who died at sea to the Indian Navy near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the wee hours on Saturday, a release said.

Indian Navy ship, INS Bitra, which was on deployment off Rameshwaram, coordinated with the Sri Lankan Navy ship and received the fishermen and the dead body at sea at about 1am.

The Indian Navy ship then proceeded to Rameshwaram, where the Navy Officer from the Naval Detachment coordinated with marine police and Tamil Nadu Fisheries department in transferring the mortal remains and the fishermen, at around 3 am.

On 1 August, a fisherman from Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram reportedly died and another went missing when the boat in which they were fishing in the mid-sea capsized after colliding with the Sri Lankan Navy ship.

While one fisherman reportedly died, two men were detained. *—PTI*

'END OF AN ERA'

Yamini Krishnamurthy no more

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy died at the Apollo hospital here on Saturday. She was 84.

"She was suffering from age-related issues and was in the ICU for the last seven months," Krishnamurthy's manager and secretary Ganesh told PTI.

Krishnamurthy's mortal remains will be brought to her institute -- Yamini School of Dance at Hauz Khas -- at 9 am on Sunday. The details of her last rites are yet to be finalised.

Born on December 20, 1940 in Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district to Sanskrit scholar M Krishnamurthy, she took to dance at the tender age of five at the Kalakshetra School of Dance in Chennai under the tutelage of legendary Bharatanatyam dancer Rukmini Devi Arundale.

Veteran dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy **PHOTO: FACEBOOK**

Also proficient in the form of Kuchipudi, Krishnamurti expanded her horizon by learning Odissi from the likes of Pankaj Charan Das and Kelucharan Mohapatra.

Krishnamurthy received Padma Shri at the young age of 28 in 1968, Padma Bhushan in 2001 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016. She was also conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1977.

Former Rajya Sabha MP and Bharatanatyam dancer Sonal Mansingh said Krishnamurthy "blazed like a meteor in the sky".

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy also took to X to pay tributes to Krishnamurthy.

"I'm deeply saddened to hear of the demise of Yamini Krishnamurthy garu, the celebrated exponent of Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam. My thoughts and prayers are with her family in these difficult times," he said. *—PTI*

'Will appeal against SC verdict on Dalit sub-groups'

PATNA, 3 AUG

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Saturday opposed the Supreme Court judgement allowing States to create sub-groups within Scheduled Castes for a slice of the 15 per cent quota, and declared that his Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) will appeal against it.

Paswan said he was in favour of a caste census, for which a vociferous demand is being made by the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, though he was also of the view that findings thereof "must not be made public".

Hajipur MP, whose late father Ram Vilas Paswan was among the tallest Dalit leaders of the country, expressed surprise that "the word untouchability does not even find a mention in the apex court judgement".

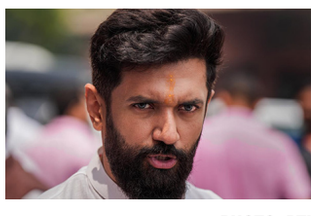


PHOTO: PTI

Paswan, however, refused to comment on the stand taken by his alliance partner JD(U) over the issue, which has hailed the verdict as a "vindication" of policies of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who had years ago created the "Mahadalit" category in the state. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

Toll rises to 38 in bridge collapse at Shaanxi in China

BEIJING, 3 AUG

The death toll has risen to 38 from the partial collapse of a highway bridge in northwestern Shaanxi province two weeks ago that plunged two dozen vehicles into a rushing river, China's state broadcaster CCTV reported Friday evening. The report said 24 people were still missing from the 19 July disaster, after which one person was saved. The area where the bridge on the Danning highway fell had experienced heavy rains in the preceding days. At least 25 cars fell into the river, according to CCTV, and teams have searched kilometers (miles) downstream looking for victims. A photo released by the Xinhua news agency shortly after the incident showed a section of the bridge snapped and folded at almost a 90-degree angle into the rushing brown water below. The river passes through a mountain valley and the waters are turbulent, the report said. *—AP*

ISIS commander and 2 others held in Pak's Punjab

LAHORE, 3 AUG

Pakistani law enforcement agencies have arrested three alleged terrorists, including an "important" commander of ISIS in the Punjab province of the country, police said on Saturday. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police said in a statement that three Daesh (ISIS) terrorists have been arrested during an intelligence-based operation in the Faisalabad, Jehlum and Chakwal cities. The CTD said that an "important" commander of ISIS, Abdul Wahab, has been among the arrested terrorists. The other two ISIS terrorists have been identified as Saifullah and Khurram Abbas. Explosives and weapons have been recovered from the suspects, according to the statement. Those arrested have been shifted to an undisclosed place for further investigation. Last month, the CTD arrested 38 suspected terrorists. *—PTI*

Amazon faces severe drought threats again

BRASILIA, 3 AUG

Holder of one-fifth of the world's fresh water, the Amazon is beginning the dry season with many of its rivers already at critically low levels, prompting governments to anticipate contingency measures to address issues ranging from disrupted navigation to increasing forest fires. "The Amazon Basin is facing one of the most severe droughts in recent years in 2024, with significant impacts on several member countries," stated a technical note issued Wednesday by the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO), which includes Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. *—PTI*

Aerosmith band retires from touring

LOS ANGELES, 3 AUG

After entertaining music lovers for over five decades, iconic rockband Aerosmith is retiring from touring. On Friday, the band, in an Instagram post, thanked music lovers for their love and announced that they are ending their "Peace Out: The Farewell" tour early as frontman Steven Tyler cannot sing the way he used to due to a vocal injury. The tour was initially supposed to end in 2025. "It was 1970 when a spark of inspiration became Aerosmith. Thanks to you, our Blue Army, that sparks caught flame and has been burning for over five decades. Some of you have been with us since the beginning and all of you are the reason we made rock 'n' roll history," the band shared in its note. *—PTI*

Trump agrees to debate Kamala Harris on 4 Sept

Trump is scheduled to address an election rally in Atlanta

WASHINGTON, 3 AUG

US Vice President Kamala Harris became the Democratic Party's Presidential nominee in the least democratic way possible as not a single vote was cast in her name, rival Republican candidate Donald Trump's campaign has claimed, describing the process as "reminiscent of communist China".

Trump also said that he has agreed to debate Democratic candidate Kamala Harris live on 4 September.

Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, was declared the 2024 presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Party on Friday after she won enough votes from Democratic delegates in a virtual roll call.

Harris, 59, would face former president Trump, 78, in the general elections on 5 November. "Democrats are the real threat to democracy," the Trump Campaign said. "In a process more reminiscent of communist China, Democrat elites deposed their previous nominee when their coverup of his decline was no longer tenable, then coronated Kamala in the least democratic way possible," the Trump campaign said, referring to 81-year-old US President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race last month.

Now, they're shielding her from the public as long as they can lest voters notice her dangerously liberal ideology and complete lack of fitness for office, it said. Meanwhile, in an email to his supporters, former president and the Republican presidential nominee Trump pledged to "unleash hell" on Harris.

Trump is scheduled to address an election rally on Saturday in the key battleground state of Atlanta, days after he questioned her racial identity. *—PTI*

Vice President Kamala Harris delivers remarks at a Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority gathering in Houston **PHOTO: PTI**

- Now, they're shielding her from the public as long as they can lest voters notice her dangerously liberal ideology and complete lack of fitness for office, it said. Trump and the Republican presidential nominee Trump pledged to "unleash hell" on Harris

They are very irresponsible: Trump slams Google

WASHINGTON, 3 AUG

Former US president Donald Trump has lashed out at Google over reports that was censoring news and photos of the Republican presidential candidate.

"Google has been very bad. They've been very irresponsible and I have a feeling that Google is going to be close to shut down because I don't think Congress is going to take it. I really don't think so. Google has to be careful," Trump told Fox News in an interview.

Early this week, Trump alleged that it was virtually impossible to find pictures or anything about the failed assassination bid on him on 13 July on Google. Google, however, denied those allegations.

"Over the past few days, some people on X have posted claims that search is 'censoring' or 'banning' particular terms. That's not happening, and we want to set the record straight. The posts relate to our Autocomplete feature, which predicts queries to save you time. Autocomplete," it said in a social media post. *—PTI*

PRISONER SWAP

Russian President Vladimir Putin meets Russian citizens released after the Russian-US prisoner swap in Moscow, Russia **PHOTO: PTI**

'Russia won't forget its security operatives abroad'

MOSCOW, 3 AUG

President Vladimir Putin strode along the red carpet between two rows of rifle-toting honor guards and warmly greeted intelligence operatives freed in the biggest prisoner swap with the West since the Cold War.

"The Motherland hasn't forgotten about you for a minute," Putin said, embracing each of them after they walked down the steps of the jetliner that ferried them home.

Putin, who rarely — if ever — travels to the airport to greet foreign heads of state these days, was delivering a clear, morale-boosting message to his security services: If you get caught, Russia will bring you home.

For the Kremlin, Vadim Krasikov, the hitman imprisoned in Germany for killing a former Chechen militant in Berlin, was perhaps the most important component in the exchange that saw eight Russians swapped for 16 Westerners and Russian dissidents who had been imprisoned in recent years.

Moscow freed American journalists Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva, former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan and a group of top dissidents. Washington extolled it as a major diplomatic victory. But so did Moscow.

"Putin is sending a signal that those working abroad will have maximum protection, and that if they are arrested, the state will fight for their return and roll out the red carpet for them," said Tatyana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre.

She noted that Russian and Western perceptions of the deal were starkly different. Krasikov was convicted in 23 August, 2019, killing of Zelimkhan "Tornike" Khangoshvili, a 40-year-old Georgian citizen who had fought Russian troops in Chechnya and later claimed asylum in Germany. *—PTI*

US sends warships as Iran threatens Israel

Tensions remain high in the region over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and a key commander of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah **PHOTO: US NAVY**

WASHINGTON, 3 JULY

The US will deploy additional warships and fighter jets to the Middle East to help defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies, the Pentagon said.

Tensions remain high in the region over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and a key commander of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Missile Defence forces were placed on a state of increased readiness to deploy, the Pentagon said, adding that its commitment to defend Israel was "ironclad".

Iran's leader Ayatollah Khamenei has vowed "harsh punishment" against Israel for the assassination of Haniyeh.

The Hamas leader was killed in Tehran on Wednesday. Iran and its proxy in Gaza blamed the attack on Israel, which has not commented. Haniyeh, 62, was widely considered Hamas's overall leader and played a key role in negotiations aimed at reaching a ceasefire in the Gaza war.

His death came just hours after Israel claimed it killed Fuad Shukr, the top military commander of Iran's proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah. A Pentagon statement said the new deployments would "improve US force protection... increase support for the defence of Israel, and ... ensure the US is prepared to respond to various contingencies".

The deployments would include additional ballistic missile defense-capable cruisers and destroyers, it said. Israel has not commented directly on the strike which killed Haniyeh. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country had delivered "crushing blows" to its enemies in recent days, including the killing of Shukr in Beirut. *—BBC News*

Waves of Russian bombings drive major gains in East Ukraine

MOSCOW, 3 JULY

Russian assaults are raising pressure on the strategic eastern logistics hub of Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region, Ukraine says, as waves of guided bombs and infantry lead to some of Moscow's largest territorial gains since the spring. The push is fuelling a surge in civilians fleeing, with requests for evacuation in the area increasing about tenfold over the past two weeks, according to a volunteer helping people leave. Russia's gains of about 57 sq km in the space of a week are the third-largest recorded since April after they made only modest gains in June, Pasi Paroinen, an analyst with the Black Bird Group, told Reuters. Russian forces are using warplanes and artillery fire to support waves of infantry assaults in the area near Pokrovsk, a spokesperson for Ukraine's National Guard said. *— Courtesy, The Guardian*

Terror attack in Somali beach kills at least 32

MOGADISHU, 3 AUG

At least 32 people were killed and several others injured after a suicide bomber and gunmen targeted a popular beachfront location in the Somali capital Mogadishu's Abdiaziz district on Saturday, a police spokesman has said.

Abdifatah Adan Hassan said around 63 people are wounded, some of them critically.

Local media say the attack was carried out by al-Shabab militants who control large parts of southern and central Somalia.

The group is affiliated to al-Qaeda and has waged a brutal insurgency for nearly 20 years against the UN-backed government in Somalia.

One eyewitness told AFP news agency people were in a state of panic, as "it was hard to know what was happening because shooting started soon after the blast".

Abdilatif Ali said some people attempted to take cover on the ground, while others tried to flee the location.

At least five people were responsible for the attack, as Hasan said one attacker blew himself up while three others were killed. One attacker was captured alive, the police spokesman told reporters in Mogadishu. *—BBC News*

Dozens of children killed in Bangladesh protests: UNICEF

DHAKA, 3 AUG

At least 32 children have died during student protests that engulfed Bangladesh in July, the UN's children's agency has said. The youngest child killed had yet to turn five years old, a Unicef spokesperson said, adding that most of those who died were bystanders.

They were among more than 200 people who were killed during demonstrations against job quotas in the civil service, according to figures verified by BBC Bangla. The quota system has now been scaled back by the government following a Supreme Court ruling, but students have continued protesting - now demanding justice for those who died or have been injured or detained.

While the protests are now smaller in scale, the government is struggling to control the rising tide of anger over how it initially responded to the demonstrations. *—BBC News*

Activists take part against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government to demand justice in Bangladesh on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

To Lam **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Vietnam's Prez to be new Communist Party chief

PHNOM PENH, 3 AUG

Vietnamese President To Lam was confirmed Saturday as the new chief of the Communist Party after his predecessor died July 19.

Lam will be the general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the country's most powerful political role, state media said. It was unclear if Lam will stay in his role as president.

The previous general secretary, Nguyen Phu Trong, dominated Vietnamese politics since he became party chief in 2011. He was elected to a third term as general secretary in 2021. He was an ideologue who viewed corruption as the gravest threat facing the party.

In his first speech as the Communist Party chief, Lam said that him taking the reigns was because of "an urgent need to ensure the leadership of the party." As Vietnam's top security official, Lam led Trong's sweeping anti-graft campaign until May, when he became president following the resignation of his predecessor, who stepped down after being caught by the campaign.

Big changes in Vietnam's strategic approach are unlikely, said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow in the Vietnam Studies Program at Singapore's ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, but Lam's relative newness to governing meant that it remains to be seen how he will lead. *—AP*

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMIN BACKTRACKS

Pentagon chief revokes 9/11 plotters plea deal

WASHINGTON DC, 3 JULY

The US secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, has revoked a plea deal for the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks and two other defendants, reinstating them as death-penalty cases, according to a memo sent to Susan Escallier, who is overseeing the war court proceedings.

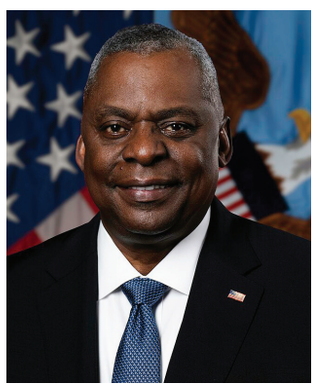
The short-lived deal came 16 years after prosecution of the three men began. On Wednesday, Escallier announced that she signed a deal with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two of his accomplices, Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin 'Attash and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al-Hawsawi. Defense lawyers had requested that the men receive life sentences in exchange for the guilty pleas.

In Friday's memo, Austin argued that due to the "significance of the decision to enter into pre-trial agreements with the accused in the above-referenced case, responsibility for such a decision should rest with me as the superior convening authority".

For some victims' families, the deal Escallier entered into destroyed any chance of a full trial that could have ended in death sentences and given people the opportunity to address the men accused of killing their loved ones, according to the Washington Post.

News of the original plea deal elicited sharp criticism from Republican lawmakers, including Mitch McConnell and JD Vance, who decried the deal, and the New York congresswoman Elise Stefanik, who accused the Biden-Harris administration of betraying the American people.

J Wells Dixon, a staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights who has represented defendants at Guantánamo Bay as well as other detainees there who have been cleared of any wrongdoing, had welcomed the plea bargains as the only feasible way to resolve the long-stalled and legally fraught 9/11 cases. *—Courtesy, The Guardian*



US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, has revoked a plea deal for the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks **PHOTO: X**

India is working towards global food security: PM

Modi during 32nd ICAE meet also said that India has become a food surplus country

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India has become a food surplus country and is also working to provide solutions for global food and nutritional security.

Prime Minister said agriculture is at the centre of India's economic policies, and the Union Budget 2024-25 has given a big push to sustainable and climate-resilient farming and developing a complete ecosystem to support Indian farmers.

He was addressing the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE), which is being organised in India after 65 years.

Recalling the last International Conference of Agricultural Economists, Modi mentioned that India was then a newly Independent nation, and it was a challenging time for the country's agriculture and food security.

"Now, India is a food surplus country," he said, adding that the country is the number one producer of milk, pulses and spices in the world.

Also, the country has become the second-largest producer of foodgrains, fruits, vegetables, cotton, sugar and tea.

"There was a time when India's food security was a concern for the world. Now, India is working to provide solutions for global food security and global nutritional security," he said at the conference, attended by about 1,000 delegates from around 70 countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks at the inauguration of the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists **PHOTO: PTI**

Therefore, Modi said, India's experience is valuable for discussions on food system transformation and will benefit the global south.

The Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to global welfare as a 'Vishwa Bandhu'. He highlighted various mantras put forward by India on various fora, including 'One Earth, One Family and One Future', 'Mission LiFE' and 'One Earth One Health'.

He underlined India's approach of not viewing the health of humans, plants and animals in silos.

Modi emphasised the importance of the agriculture sector in the Indian economy and highlighted the work done by his government in the last 10 years for the growth of the farm sector in a sustainable manner. In Indian agriculture, 90 per cent of farmers own very little land, and these small farmers are the biggest strength of India's food security, Modi said.

Prime Minister also said India has provided 1,900 new climate-resilient varieties of crops in the last 10 years.

Modi expressed India's willingness to share India's millet basket with the world.

The conference will provide a platform for young researchers and leading professionals to present their work and network with global peers.

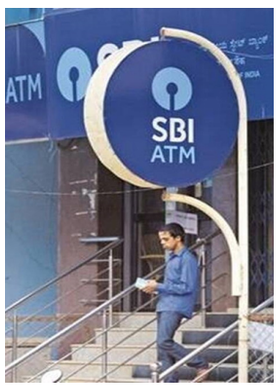
The triennial conference, organised by the International Association of Agricultural Economists, is being held from 2-7 August.

The theme for this year's conference is "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems. *—PTI*

India's forex reserves decline after hitting record

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

India's foreign exchange reserves have come off their all-time high, after touching a record high last week. It broke the consecutive three-week rising streak. In the week that ended on 26 July, the foreign exchange kitty declined by USD 3.471 billion to USD 667.386 billion, official data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed on Friday. In the week that ended on 19 July, the foreign exchange kitty had touched a record high of USD 670.857 billion. The previous high was at USD 666.85 touched last week. The reserves have been rising on and off for a long time now. So far in 2024, they have risen by about USD 40-45 billion, on a cumulative basis. The buffer of foreign exchange reserves insulates domestic economic activity from global spillovers. According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the biggest component of the forex reserves, declined USD 1.171 billion to USD 586.877 billion. Gold reserves during the week declined USD 2.297 billion to USD 57.695 billion. *—ANI*



SBI's net profit almost flat at ₹17K crore in Q2

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

State Bank of India (SBI) on Saturday reported an almost flat standalone net profit at Rs 17,035 crore for the first quarter of the current financial year. The country's biggest lender had posted a net profit of Rs 16,884 crore in the April-June quarter of 2023-24. The bank's total income increased to Rs 1,22,688 crore in the first quarter against Rs 1,08,039 crore a year ago, SBI said in a regulatory filing. During the quarter, the bank earned an interest income of Rs 1,11,526 crore compared to Rs 95,975 crore in the year-ago period. The bank's gross non-performing assets (NPA) of the total advances declined to 2.21 per cent in the first quarter from 2.76 per cent at June-end last year. Similarly, its net NPAs also eased to 0.57 per cent in June 2024 from 0.71 per cent a year ago. On a consolidated basis, SBI's net profit rose marginally to Rs 19,325 crore against Rs 18,537 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. At the same time, its total income increased to Rs 1,52,125 crore compared to Rs 1,32,333 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year. *—PTI*

Credit offtake grew ₹20L cr, deposits by ₹23.9L cr in 1 yr

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

O The credit offtake continue to grow at the rate of 13.9 year-on-year to reach Rs. 168.1 lakh crore for the fortnight ending 12 July, 2024, however, the pace of growth was slow, a Care Edge report said. Credit offtake is a type of bank credit that assists businesses in getting financing for future projects. The credit offtake increased by 14.0 per cent year-on-year but declined by 0.4 per cent sequentially for the fortnight ended 12 July, 2024. Deposits grew by 11.3 per cent year-on-year for the fortnight, including the impact of the HDFC merger, reaching Rs. 211.8 lakh crore, driven by growth in time deposits. Inflows over the past three and six months show credit offtake at 5.3 per cent for six months and 2.3 per cent for three months, lagging deposit growth of 6.0 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively. In absolute terms, deposits expanded by Rs. 23.9 lakh crore over the last twelve months. *—ANI*

SAYS GERMAN ECONOMIST

Creating a hunger-free world by 2030 is unlikely

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

United Nations' goal of creating a hunger-free world by 2030 most likely will not be achieved, an eminent German agriculture economist said on Saturday.

Addressing the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE), professor of agricultural economics and director of the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany, Martin Qaim further said some forms of malnutrition are even on the rise globally.

"At present, we have widespread hunger and malnutrition around the world, seriously hampering development.

"Our goal of a world without hunger will most likely not be achieved by 2030," he said.

Qaim said climate change and geopolitical tensions are exacerbating hunger and malnutrition problems.

"And we cannot ignore that our food systems themselves were contributing significantly to the climate crisis and several other environmental problems," he said.

Climate change and geopolitical tensions are exacerbating hunger and malnutrition problems **PHOTO: UNICEF**

Noting that without major changes in the way the world produces, distributes and consumes foods, Qaim said that none of the 17 SDG goals can be achieved.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development -- adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 -- provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries -- developed and developing -- in a global partnership.

Goal 2 of SDG is about creating a world free of hunger by 2030. *—PTI*

NEW TAX REGIME OFFERS A CLEAR IDEA OF TAX LIABILITY

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

India's tax landscape has undergone a transformation with the introduction of the new income tax regime, a key highlight of the Union Budget 2024-25.

An increasing number of taxpayers have opted for the New Tax Regime this year. Out of the total ITRs of 7.28 crore filed for Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25, 5.27 crore have been filed in the New Tax Regime compared to 2.01 crore ITRs filed in the Old Tax Regime.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) reported that the new structure offers a clear and straightforward calculation of tax liability, saving time and reducing the chances of errors and misunderstandings.

For individuals juggling multiple income sources or those who find tax filing daunting, the new regime is a welcome change.

The new tax regime features lower tax rates, resulting in more disposable income for taxpayers. *—ANI*

TO BE CONCLUDED BY 2025

Next round of India-Asean FTA review talks in Nov

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The next round of talks for the ongoing review meeting of the India-Asean free trade agreement in goods will be held in November, an official statement said on Saturday.

The third round of the negotiations was concluded on 1 August in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Eight sub-committees have been constituted under the India-Asean Free Trade Agreement Joint Committee for undertaking negotiations on different areas related to the review of the pact.

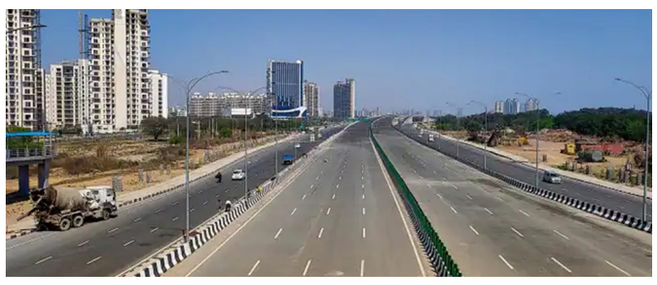
During the third round of negotiations in Jakarta, Indonesia, all eight Sub- Sub-Committees dealing with national treatment and market access, rules of origin, standards, technical regulations, customs procedures and trade facilitation held substantive discussions.

PHOTO: PTI

ASEAN is an important trade partner of India with about 11 per cent share in India's global trade.

India's exports to the 10-nation bloc ASEAN were USD 41.2 billion in 2023-24, while imports aggregated at USD 80 billion in the last fiscal. Both sides are aiming to conclude the review in 2025.

The review of the AITIGA was a long-standing demand of Indian businesses. *—PTI*



The implementation of these projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore **PHOTO: PTI**

Govt nod to 8 high-speed road corridor projects of ₹50K cr

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The government approved eight national high-speed road corridor projects of length 936 km entailing investment of Rs 50,655 crore to improve logistics efficiency and connectivity across the country, an official statement said.

The implementation of these eight important projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore mandays of direct and indirect employment, it said.

The projects approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs include 6-Lane Agra-Gwalior National High-Speed Corridor, 4-Lane Kharagpur-Moregram National High-Speed Corridor, 6-Lane Tharad-Deesa-Mehsana-Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor, 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road, 4-Lane Section between Pathalgaon and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National Highspeed Corridor, and 6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road.

On the new projects, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a tweet on X said: "'Tranformative' boost to India's landscape!

"Cabinet's approval of 8 National High-Speed Road Corridor Projects at an expenditure of over Rs 50,000 crore will have a 'multiplier' effect on our economic 'growth' and boost 'employment' opportunities. It also underlines our commitment to a futuristic and connected India."

The 68-km access-controlled Ayodhya Ring Road will be developed in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs. 3,935 crore.

Infrastructure development is the foundation for a country's economic prosperity and is critical for improving the quality of life of its citizens. Every rupee spent on infrastructure development has a multiplier effect of about 2.5-3.0 times on GDP. *—PTI*

'India's energy consumption may rise by 3-4 times in 10 yrs'

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Growing industrialisation, urbanisation, and rising incomes have led to the country's energy consumption rising rapidly. According to a recent report by India Energy and Climate Centre (IECC) India's energy consumption is expected to increase three to four-fold in the coming decade.

The report adds that India is projected to be the largest contributor to additional global energy demand between 2020-2040.

In comparison to other industrialised economies, India lags by USD 1-2 trillion in its energy infrastructure investment, which is likely to take place in the next 2-3 decades.

Per capita electricity consumption in India is much below the global average, but total electricity demand is growing at 8-9 per cent per year and is projected to double by 2030 if compared with demand in 2020.

India lags by $ 1-2T in its energy infrastructure investment **PHOTO: ANI**

Because of global warming and increased pay-out capacity, electricity demand for cooling appliances is projected to increase six-fold by 2040.

The IECC report anticipates that India's energy demand growth is accompanied by a deep reduction in clean energy technology costs, especially for wind turbines, solar PV cells, lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries, hydrogen electrolysers.

The report says the cost of co-located solar and storage projects with approximately 2-4 hours of energy storage to meet evening peak demand is projected to be Rs. 3-4/kWh by 2030, which is lower than the variable cost of nearly half (80-100 GW) of India's existing coal capacity.

The India Energy and Climate Centre has prepared this report in collaboration with key stakeholders in government, regulatory commissions, and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency. *—ANI*

India registers 8K farmer producer groups under Central Scheme

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The Government of India has made considerable progress under the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for the "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)."

According to a press release by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, as of 30 June, a total of 8,875 FPOs have been registered across the country, marking a major milestone in the initiative aimed at transforming the agricultural landscape.

The cumulative paid-up capital for these 8,875 FPOs stands at Rs 630.3 crore. Under the scheme, a cumulative amount of Rs 210.1 crore has been released to eligible FPOs as a matching equity grant, demonstrating the government's commitment to bolstering financial support for farmer collectives.

The CSS for the "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)" adopts a cluster-based approach for

PHOTO: ANI

produce or produce mix.

Additionally, it emphasizes the "One District One Product" strategy, which aims to develop product specialization.

This approach encourages FPOs to focus on processing, branding, marketing, and exporting specific agricultural products declared for their respective districts.

To further support these FPOs, the scheme includes provisions for a credit guarantee fund. Under this provision, loans worth Rs. 50.4 crore have been issued to FPOs, providing them with the necessary financial backing to expand their operations and enhance productivity. *—ANI*

SLUMP IN CONSUMPTION

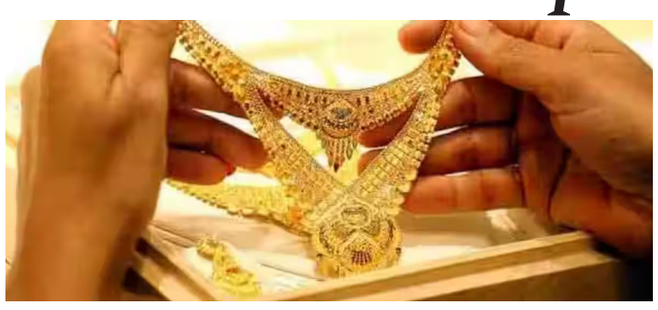
Global gold demand drops 6% in Q2

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Global gold demand in Q2 2024, excluding over-the-counter (OTC) transactions declined by 6 per cent year-on-year (y/y) to 929 tonnes, primarily due to a sharp fall in jewellery consumption according to the latest report of World Gold Council.

However, when including OTC investment, total gold demand increased by 4 per cent y/y to 1,258 tonnes, marking the highest Q2 figure since data collection began in 2000.

The record-high gold prices took a significant toll on jewellery consumption. Volumes fell 19 per cent y/y to 391 tonnes, the lowest in four years.



Report reveals a mixed picture for gold market in Q2 **PHOTO: PTI**

The report reveals a mixed picture for the Indian market in the second quarter of 2024. While overall gold demand showed a modest increase due to investment in OTC markets and central bank purchases, India witnessed trends that reflect broader market shifts.

This decline reflects the impact of elevated gold prices on consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly in markets sensitive to price fluctuations, including India. Central banks continued to be significant players in the gold market, with net gold buying increasing by 6 per cent y/y to 184 tonnes.

Mine production reached a record 929 tonnes for a second quarter, while recycling supply was the highest since 2012, reflecting the response to rising prices.

The decline in ETF holdings was followed by early outflows and nascent inflows later in the quarter. Retail bar and coin investment experienced a 5 per cent decline to 261 tonnes, mainly due to weakened demand from Western markets. Conversely, gold used in technology saw an 11 per cent y/y increase, driven by the continued growth in artificial intelligence (AI) applications. *—ANI*

'Working-age population to rise until 2040 in India'

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

India's share of working-age individuals is projected to rise until 2040 and maintain a substantial workforce until almost 2050, while countries such as the People's Republic of China and Japan face declining working-age populations, according to Asian Development Bank report.

Statista data highlights that India's working-age population made up over 60 per cent of its total population in 2011 and is expected to grow until 2031.

This demographic trend underscores the importance of labour mobility and regional cooperation to address workforce imbalances and sustain economic growth across Asia and the Pacific.

PHOTO: PTI

Regional cooperation through bodies such as ASEAN can facilitate this migration strategy by standardising licensing and training requirements and establishing skills partnerships between destination and origin countries. Asia and the Pacific have matched population growth with productivity-enhancing investments in infrastructure. *—ANI*

COUNTRIES				
1. China	16	11	9	36
2. France	12	14	15	41
3. Aus	12	7	5	24
4. US	11	20	20	51
50. India	0	0	3	3

DEEPIKA LOSES; INDIA'S ARCHERY CAMPAIGN ENDS

PARIS, 3 AUG

Deepika Kumari placed herself in an advantageous position against Korea's Suhyeon Nam by winning two of the first three sets but shot a horrible 7 with the second arrow of the fourth set to throw away a great opportunity as India's archery campaign folded at the Paris Olympics here Saturday.

Deepika had begun the day well with a 6-4 win over Germany's Michelle Kroppen but lost by the same margin to Nam, who had won the women's team gold on Friday.

Teenager Bhajan Kaur was eliminated earlier in the day after losing her pre-quarterfinal match to Indonesia's Diananda Choirunisa in a shoot-off.

Competing in her fourth Olympics, Deepika yet again left the big stage empty-handed. However, there was no hype around her this time, following disappointments in London, Rio and Tokyo editions. Leading 4-2, Deepika aced a 10 to start the fourth set but fell into the red zone with a seven after the Korean shot a 10 and a nine. Nam did not make any mistake on her final shot, making a 10 to force a decider. However, on the positive note the high on confidence after the historic win over Tokyo Games silver medallist Australia in their final pool match, India would look to carry on the momentum and seal a win against Great Britain in the quarterfinals of the men's hockey competition on Sunday. *—PTI*

1 LAKSHYA

Lakshya Sen to face Dane Axelsen in semis

PARIS, 3 AUG

Making his Olympics debut, India's Lakshya Sen created history on Friday after becoming the first Indian individual male shuttler to reach the last four of the showpiece with a 19-21 21-15 21-12 win over Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen in an intense quarterfinal match.

The Indian will have yet another uphill task at hand when he takes on Axelsen, the baby-faced badminton giant, who has terrorised his opponents in the last few years. The 30-year-old from Odense, Denmark, has won the Tokyo gold and Rio bronze, two world championship titles in 2017 and 2022, a Thomas Cup triumph in 2016 and multiple BWF world tour and Superseries titles to experience a dominating run as world No. 1 from December 2021 to June 2024.

Sen, a 2021 World championships bronze medallist, has lost seven times to the super Dane, who faced defeat just once against the Indian at the 2022 German Open. The 22-year-old, however, has shown little to no respect for the past records against his higher-ranked opponents so far as he plotted the downfall of world number 4 Jonatan Christie in the group stage and Chou, ranked 11, in the quarters.

Axelsen has looked a tad subdued this season with just one title at the Malaysia Masters. The Dane also suffered an ankle injury in early June during the Singapore Open and was forced to withdraw from the Indonesia Open. He has been rock solid in his defence as he covered the court well and played at a high pace. His ability to produce winners at will has held him in good stead. *—PTI*

Djokovic sets up final with Alcaraz

Novak Djokovic **PHOTO: PTI**

PARIS, 3 AUG

Novak Djokovic will face Carlos Alcaraz in Sunday's men's singles gold-medal match, which will be a repeat of last month's Wimbledon final.

Djokovic, holder of a men's record 24 Grand Slam titles, beat Italian Lorenzo Musetti 6-4 6-2 on Friday to reach the Olympic final for the first time. The 37-year-old Serb, who lost in straight sets to Alcaraz at the All England Club last month, has won every major singles title except the Olympics. He was fourth in Tokyo three years ago and took bronze at Beijing in 2008 - his only previous Olympic medal. Djokovic's routine win was in stark contrast to his match on the same court against Musetti at the French Open two months ago, which went to five sets and finished at 03:07 local time.

On the other hand, Matthew Ebden and John Peers fought back from a set and a break down against America's Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram to win gold for Australia in the men's doubles in Paris. They wrapped up a 6-7 (6-8) 7-6 (7-1) 10-8 victory with their fourth match point. Ebden paired with India's Rohan Bopanna few months back and won Australian Open. *—BBC News*

Hate speech directed at Khelif, Yu-Ting unacceptable: IOC leader

PARIS, 3 AUG

IOC President Thomas Bach said Saturday the "hate speech" directed at boxers Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-Ting at the Paris Olympics is "totally unacceptable."

"We will not take part in a politically motivated ... cultural war," Bach said at a news briefing at the midway point of the games, that also tried to draw a line under days of global scrutiny about the female boxers' gender. "What is going on in this context in the social media with all this hate speech, with this aggression and abuse, and fueled by this agenda, is totally unacceptable," the International Olympic Committee leader said.

Khelif of Algeria and Lin of Taiwan have been the focus of intense attention — and often inaccurate commentary — because both were disqualified at the 2023 world championships.

PHOTO: X

In a separate incident, France set up an Olympic men's football semi-final with Egypt after beating Argentina 1-0 in a hostile quarter-final marred by ugly scenes at the final whistle.

Players and coaches from both sides clashed on the pitch at the end as the hosts booked their last-four spot. Crystal Palace striker Jean-Philippe Mateta got France's winner when he headed home Michael Olise's fifth-minute corner at the near post.

Argentina's best chance came just before half-time with Giuliano Simeone heading over from close range.

There has been recent animosity between the teams, with Argentina players filmed singing a derogatory song about France's black players in the aftermath of winning the Copa America on 14 July. French fans booed the Argentinian national anthem before the match at Nouveau Stade de Bordeaux, and the fracas at the final whistle highlighted the rivalry and tension. *—AP/ BBC News*

Boxer Angela Carini to get $50,000 award from IBA

VILLEPINTE, 3 AUG

The banned International Boxing Association wants to give a $50,000 prize to Italy boxer Angela Carini, who tearfully quit her opening bout with Imane Khelif of Algeria at the Paris Olympics after just 46 seconds. IBA President Umar Kremlev also said he intends to award $25,000 to Italy's national federation and $25,000 to Carini's coach after her dramatic opening-round exit against Khelif. The IBA claims Khelif failed an unspecified gender identity test last year at its world championships, and it has stoked a worldwide uproar over the presence of Khelif and Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan in the Olympic women's boxing tournament. *—AP*

Gymnast Carlos Yulo from Philippines wins Gold

PARIS, 3 AUG

Carlos Yulo won the second Olympic gold medal ever for the Philippines, edging defending champion Artem Dolgopyat of Israel in the men's floor exercise finals at the Paris Games on Saturday.

The 24-year-old Yulo scored 15.000, just ahead of Dolgopyat, the defending champion at 14.966. Jake Jarman of Britain claimed the bronze with a 14.933. Yulo stuck his triple-twisting dismount during his final tumbling pass. He stuck his arms out and roared inside a packed Bercy Arena before walking off the podium. Yulo joins weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz as Olympic gold medalists from the Philippines. Diaz earned gold in the women's 55-kilogram division in Tokyo three years ago. *—AP*

Indian restaurants offer home food for athletes

CHATEAUROUX, 3 AUG

The streets of the charming Chateauroux resemble a mini India with a touch of 'Taj Mahal and Bombay' offering double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker and other shooters a welcome escape from the "barely survivable" Games Village food.

Breaking a 12-year medal jinx, the shooters have already won their highest ever Olympics tally of three bronze, with Manu becoming the first Indian athlete post-Independence to win two medals at a single edition.

Atif Noman, who hails from Punjab province in Pakistan, co-owner of the 'Taj Mahal' restaurant in the city centre distinctly remembers serving Manu "her favourite delicacies".

"Matar paneer, Dal Makhani, palak paneer, all medium spicy and plain naan would be their regular orders. They would come in batches and would eat vegetarian food only," he recollected, while playing some Hindi chartbusters.

Just 300 metres from Taj Mahal, one would find another restaurant "Bombay", the oldest one in the town serving Indian delicacies for 38 years.

"It was like 'home away from home' for them. This is the first time we witnessed so many Indians coming here and they loved every bit of it," restaurant manager Mohammed Hamza, who hails from Afghanistan, said. *—PTI*

KEY EVENTS

BADMINTON | 12.00 PM

MEN'S SINGLES, SEMI-FINAL

Lakshya Sen

Sen made history by becoming the first Indian male shuttler to reach the semifinals at the 2024 Olympics.

HOCKEY | 1.30 PM

IND VS GREAT BRITAIN

Men's Tournament, Quarter-Final

ATHLETICS - 01:35 PM

WOMEN'S 3000M STEEPLECHASE, ROUND 1

Parul Chaudhary, 29, Uttar Pradesh

She is the first Indian runner to clock a sub-9 minute time in the women's 3000m.

MEN'S LONG JUMP, QUALIFICATION ROUND - 02:30 PM

Jeswin Aldrin, 22,Tamil Nadu

Aldrin is a national record holder in long jump with 8.42m.

SHOOTING - 12:30 PM

25M RAPID FIRE PISTOL MEN, QUALIFICATION STAGE 1

Anish Bhanwala, 21, Haryana

In the ISSF World Cup, Cairo 2023 Anish won an individual bronze medal.

Vijayveer Sidhu, 22, Punjab

He won the bronze medal in the Men's 25m rapid-fire pistol team in the 2022 Asian Games.

BOXING | 12.18 PM

MEN'S WELTERWEIGHT, QUARTER-FINALS

Nishant Dev vs Merco Verde

GOLF - 12:30 PM

MEN'S INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY, ROUND 4

Shubhankar Sharma, 28, Jammu Kashmir

Sharma placed third in the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open, tied for fourth in the Resorts World Manila Masters, and finished 51st in the Order of Merit.

Gaganjeet Bhullar, 36, Punjab

Bhullar finished fifth at the Kenya Open for his best result of the season.

EQUESTRIAN - 01:30 PM

DRESSAGE INDIVIDUAL, GRAND PRIX FREESTYLE

Anush Agarwalla, 24, Kolkata

Agarwalla scored 73.030 for his bronze, which is India's first medal in the dressage event at the Asian Games.

WI pacer Kemar in test squad against South Africa

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

West Indies have announced their squad for the upcoming ICC World Test Championship against South Africa, which begins on 7 August. Pacer Kemar Roach made a return to the team, having last played a Test against Australia earlier in the year. He had been withdrawn from the tour of England after sustaining a knee injury while playing in the County Championship. However, the pacer Alzarri Joseph, the vice-captain of the Test side, was rested to manage his workload. The squad is very similar to the one that played in England in the recent Test series with Keacy Carty and Bryan Charles the only players without a Test cap. Wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva was promoted as vice-captain in Joseph's absence. West Indies Test Squad: Kraigg Brathwaite (c), Joshua Da Silva (vc), Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, and others. *—BBC News*

AHEAD OF EPL

Guardiola fined £2m fine for late start matches

PHOTO: X@CITY_CHIEF

MANCHESTER CITY, 3 AUG

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says he will make his half-time team talks shorter after the club were fined for repeatedly being late to start matches and after half-time.

The club accepted they breached Premier League rules 22 times "without good reason" and were fined £2.09m.

When asked to comment on the situation, Guardiola said: "I just read it in the news. I would try to do my speeches at half-time shorter." He was speaking before Saturday's pre-season match against Chelsea in Columbus, USA.

With so few senior players at his disposal after Euro 2024 and the Copa America, Guardiola has given significant minutes to Norway striker Erling Haaland after his national team failed to qualify for the summer tournament.

Guardiola, who previously said Haaland had "muscle niggles", said: "He woke up and feels much better. And hopefully he can play a few minutes."

Guardiola refused to comment on rumours that Atletico Madrid are in talks for striker Julian Alvarez, who is currently away at the Olympics in Paris with Argentina. But he reseved some kind words for his opposite number Enzo Maresca, who was a former member of his staff but is now managing Chelsea.

"I'm really pleased for him," Guardiola added. "We spent a special year together. He is an incredible, lovely person and his family too." *—BBC News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Morgan opts for Dravid as head coach for Eng

Former England batsman Eion Morgan has opted for Rahul Dravid to head the British side as white-ball coach replacing Mathew Mott who stepped down after defending champions' poor performance in the recently held ICC T20 World Cup in the USA. He added that he would approach Dravid, Ricky Ponting, Stephen Flemming and Brendon McCullum. *—Salar News with Agencies*

'Bumrah can make the ball obey his command'

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

MUMBAI, 3 AUG

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri stopped just short of calling pacer Jasprit Bumrah a magician with the ball and said his standout moments in the T20 World Cup in the Americas were India managing to thwart Pakistan's charge in the group stage and Rohit Sharma's side pulling the rabbit out of the hat in the final against South Africa.India managed to defend a paltry 119 in their Group A clash against the arch-rivals, winning the contest by six runs with Bumrah changing the momentum of the game by getting rid of the dangerous Mohammad Rizwan to send Pakistan into a free fall when they were chugging along nicely at 80/3.

Bumrah then bowled a game-changing spell against the Proteas in the final at Barbados, conceding just four runs in the 16th over before getting rid of the dangerous power-hitter Marco Jansen to take the fight out of the rivals in the chase of 176.

"I think the India-Pakistan (match) because India was made to fight there and realise what the right combination should be going forward in the tournament. That and then of course the (T20 World Cup) final, those final five overs," said Shastri. *—PTI*